

BW359

C6L4

John C'ockin's
Letter to an Arminian
1815

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BW 359
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Wes. 1457

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A
LETTER
TO
AN ARMINIAN;
CONTAINING
A REPLY
TO HIS ANIMADVERSIONS
ON A FUNERAL SERMON,
PREACHED AT HOLMFIRTH,
April 10th, 1814.

BY JOHN COCKIN.

"The spirit this writer displays toward the objects of his censure, is decidedly hostile; no expressions of esteem, no attempt to conciliate; all is rudeness, asperity, and contempt—He seems to have assumed a disguise for the very purpose of giving an unbridled indulgence to the insolence he condemns."

Robt. Hall.

Difficile est non scribere Satyram contra Satyram.

Halyburton.

HUDDERSFIELD:

Printed and sold by J Lancashire, Kirkgate; sold also by Williams,
London; Heaton and Robinson, Leeds; Holden, Halifax;
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Wakefield; and Thompson, Skipton.

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A Letter to an Arminian,

&c.

SIR,

After some suspence and deliberation, I have resolved to write a reply to your letter. Controversies have been maintained about subjects so unimportant; they have been conducted with so little wisdom and fairness; and so much anger and evil-speaking have been excited by them, that many excellent persons turn from them with disgust, heartily wishing they were excluded from the pulpit and the press, and were wholly banished out of the christian world. As this wish proceeds from the love of peace it deserves respect, but in the present imperfect state of things it will never be realised. Diversities of opinion have always existed in the church, and have usually produced discussion, attack, and defence. Jesus Christ exposed the erroneous sentiments of the Pharisees, and of the Saducees; and reasoned against them frequently, and with fervour. The apostles imitated their master's example; many of their sermons consisted in reasoning with Jews and Gentiles, and several of their epistles to the churches are

chiefly controversial. We are certain therefore, that controversy is not in itself unlawful, but it usually calls up so many bad passions, and terminates so frequently in personal censure, that it is justly offensive to the best minds. Our great solicitude should be to conduct it in a spirit congenial with the principles of the gospel, and with the feelings of christian piety.

It may be proper to state why the sermon, on which you have animadverted, was sent to the press. The circulation of single sermons is so contracted, their existence is so ephemeral, and I have seen such numbers of them remain unsold, that I have a great objection to publishing one, and when I have been requested to do it, I have always declined. But when I preach a Funeral sermon, I usually present a copy of it to the relatives of the deceased, in hope that it will make their serious impressions deeper, and more permanent. As the Gentleman to whom the sermon in question is dedicated, wished to present copies of it to his friends, a few were printed at his request, and at his expence. When therefore you say in your title page that it is "published," you are mistaken, and as "title-pages are ominous," this mistake may indicate some others that are hereafter to be noticed. It has never been advertised; never been sent to the booksellers; never been presented to the public in any way; and therefore it is altogether unwarrantable to make it the subject of public animadversion.

The mode of concealment also that you have adopted is unfair. My name, age, connections, and other circumstances are brought into view, and present to you so many points of attack, and topics of censure; but your name, age, character, and station in life are unknown, and thus secure from retaliation. If you are an obscure person, your

obscurity does not cast its shade over your publication; and if you are a man of celebrity, you do not risk your fame and credit upon your animadversions. In page 14th, you call me "a cowardly polemic," but this charge comes with a bad grace from a combatant who dares not discharge his artillery against his foe until he enjoys the security of a masked battery. However erroneous you may suppose my statements are, you must allow I have put my name to them; and as you have made a personal attack, you were under greater obligations in justice and in honour to do the same. Your letter reminded me of Dr. JOHNSON'S description of JUNIUS, the most renowned of all anonymous assailants. "He has sometimes made his satire felt, but let not injudicious admiration mistake the venom of the shaft for the vigour of the blow. He has sometimes sported with lucky malice; but to him that knows his company, it is not hard to be sarcastic in a mask. While he walks like *Jack the Giant killer*, in a coat of darkness, he may do much mischief with little strength. —Being at liberty to indulge himself in all the immunities of invisibility; out of the reach of danger, he has been bold; out of the reach of shame, he has been confident."*

You commence your animadversions by quoting my title-page, which is "A Funeral Sermon for the late Mrs. Green;" on which you say, "I have met with many Sermons preached on occasion of the death of pious people: But what minister before yourself, ever preached and published a discourse for the dead?" I will answer your question, and give you some information which you seem to want, by transcribing the title-pages

* Johnson's Works, Vol. 8, p. 129, edit. 1801.

of several Funeral Sermons in my possession :—
 A Funeral Sermon *for* the late Reverend Mr. Samuel Harvey, by W. Harris, D. D.—A Funeral Sermon *for* the late Reverend Mr. Samuel Newman, by John Barker.—A Funeral Sermon *for* the late Reverend Mr. John Sheffield, by Edmund Calamy, D. D.—A Funeral Sermon *for* John Fryer, Esq. by Jacob Ball.—A Funeral Sermon *for* the late Reverend and pious Mr. Samuel Pomfret, by Thomas Reynolds.—A Funeral Sermon *for* Mr. Samuel Mullins, by Henry Grove, &c. &c.
 Dr. JOHNSON enumerates in his Dictionary, forty-one senses of the preposition ‘for,’ of which the principal are ‘because of;’ ‘with respect to;’ ‘with regard to;’ ‘for the sake of.’ In your opinion, “such language, to say the least, must be acknowledged to be colloquial and vulgar;” and I maintain, on the contrary, that your criticism is frivolous and false, and that the phrase in question is justified by the example of many good authors, and is sanctioned by the highest literary authority.

I pass by your other criticisms on verbal inaccuracies, of which the vanity and the spleen are much more apparent than the justice or the truth, to notice an error of greater importance. I have said that EDWARDS’s Book on the *Freedom of the Will*, was an answer to FLETCHER’s writings, whereas it only relates to the Arminian controversy, and was written before them. This anachronism you have detected, and exposed; and this detection is honourable to you, and advantageous to me.

The *date* of EDWARDS’s Book is not of so much consequence as its *principles*; and these you have misrepresented, by identifying them with the theories of moral virtue, which have been constructed by infidel writers. The difference between them is clearly stated, and the erroneous opinion of Mr. HALL, in the passage you have quoted, is fully ex-

posed by the late Dr. WILLIAMS, in his edition of Edwards's Works, Vol. 2. page 67, note. I have received authentic information that Mr. HALL wrote that passage from a slight and imperfect acquaintance with this eminent author; and that, having since attentively read several of his Works, he now extols his principles and reasonings very highly. The doctrine of necessity has, indeed, been opposed by many celebrated writers; but the necessity which they oppose, is not the same which Edwards established. His necessity denies the self-determining power of the will, independent of motives and circumstances; but it includes the dispositions of the creature, makes him a moral agent, and constitutes him a proper subject of praise and blame.

You ask for proof of my assertion respecting Dr. ADAM CLARKE. Let the reader, with all deference to this Gentleman's elevation of character, extent of learning, and stores of information, consult his work on Gen. 3, 14; John 6, 37; 10, 28; 17, 2, 9; Acts, 4, 28; 9, 15; 13, 48; and Romans, Chap. 7, 8, 9, and judge for himself as to the harmony between the text and the comment; and when I refer to these passages, I am well aware that "men engaged, by moral or religious motives, in contrary parties, will generally look with different eyes upon every man, and decide almost every question upon different principles." —*Rambler*, No. 64.

I have said that if a reference be made to the creeds of national Churches, it is well known that the Church of England, the Church of Scotland, and every Protestant Church in Europe are established on Calvinistic principles. And you tell me, "I should have known that the AUGSBURGH *Confession of Faith*, which was drawn up by the celebrated MELANCTHON, is not Calvinistic,"

and you refer to Saurin's Sermons (Vol. 5, p. 299) for proof. MOSHEIM* says that this confession undoubtedly received its matter from LUTHER, and its form from MELANCTHON, under the inspection of LUTHER; and SAURIN says that the confession of Augsburg and the creed of Arminius differ in other articles, but agree pretty nearly in one point; and the point of agreement is this, they deny the connection between divine prescience and predestination. It appears therefore that out of all the foreign Protestant Churches, there is only one confession of faith which is not calvinistic, and that departs from Calvinism only in one article. Such an inconsiderable exception may be granted without falsifying the assertion.

On the doctrinal principles of the Church of England, you quote a passage from Bishop HORSLEY; in which he solemnly asserts that she maintains an absolute neutrality upon the principal points in dispute between the Arminians and Calvinists. So much has been said about the creed of our national Church, that any opinion on the subject may be sanctioned by great names. Bishop WATSON throws the meaning of the Articles entirely out of the question, considers them merely as articles of peace, and exhorts the clergy not to oppose them in public teaching.† Archdeacon PALEY, says they are designed to exclude Papists, Baptists, and Puritans from the Church, and he leaves the reader to infer that all others, whatever be their sentiments, may subscribe them.‡ Dr. BALGUY says "the articles, are not exactly " what we might wish them to be, some of them " are expressed in doubtful terms; others are in- " accurate, perhaps unphilosophical; others again

* Ecclesiastical History. Vol. 4. p. 92.

† Charge to the Clergy. ‡ Moral Philosophy, p. 181. quarto.

“ may chance to lead an ignorant reader into some erroneous opinion.* Dr. CROFT says, “ that some of them lean toward the side of enthusiasm.”† These various opinions naturally excite the question of Mr. HALL, “ a writer whose sentiments” you say “ few persons would care to controvert,” “ Is it not a fact that the nature and extent of the assent and consent signified by subscription, has been the subject of a very thorny controversy, in which more ill-faith and chicane have been displayed, than were ever known out of the school of the Jesuits?”‡

The most satisfactory discussion I have seen on this subject is in the second chapter of Mr. OVERTON’S “ True churchmen ascertained.” The author copiously investigates *the real sense of the articles*; and appeals to the public writings and private sentiments of the fathers of the church, to ascertain the point. He produces the testimonies of Hume,§ Mosheim,|| Robertson,¶ and Burnet,° and

* Overton, p. 27. † Bampton Lect. p. 110. ‡ Strictures on Zeal without Innovation, p. 9.

§ “The first Reformers in England, as in other European countries, had embraced the most rigid tenets of predestination and absolute decrees, and had composed upon that system all the articles of their religious creed.” Hist. of England, Vol. 6: p. 273. And in another place he says, “All the first Reformers adopted these principles.” Ibid p. 166.

|| “After the death of Henry the universities, schools, and churches (in England) became the oracles of Calvinism.—Hence it happened, that, when it was proposed under the reign of Edward the sixth, to give a fixed and stable turn to the doctrine and discipline of the Church, Geneva was acknowledged as a sister-Church, and the theological system there established by Calvin, was adopted, and rendered the public rule of faith in England. This, however, was done without any change of the form of Episcopal Government” Mosheim’s Eccles. Hist. Vol 4: p 387. “It is certain that the Calvinistical doctrine of predestination prevailed among the first English Reformers,

refers to those of of Maclaine, Strype, Wilson, Smollett, Davenant, Carleton, Hall, Ward, Usher, and Whitacre, to prove that these were calvinistic. These testimonies he confirms by the concessions and reasonings of avowed Arminians. After collecting abundant evidence to prove the Calvinism of the thirty-nine articles, he justly observes, that they do not establish it in all its parts, and to its full extent. They unquestionably build upon the same foundation with the celebrated reformer of Geneva, but do not carry the superstructure to the same height.

But you think it amusing, "that a rigid dissenter, who when occasion serves, raves against creeds and national establishments, with all the virulence of a **BOGUE** and **BENNETT**, should be pleased to think that his principles correspond with the creeds of the different protestant churches of Europe." In the Sermon on which you have animadverted, I have indeed said that creeds cannot secure uniformity of opinion, but that is not raving against them, and you do not produce proof of raving from any other source. It is perfectly consistent with my avowed principles as a calvinistic dissenter, to be attached to the doctrines of the Church of England, and to rejoice that all foreign protestant Churches, however diversified in forms

"the greatest part of whom were at least Sublapsarians." Ibid, p. 411, note.

¶ "Of all the Reformed Churches, that of England has deviated least from the ancient institutions.—Though the articles to be recognized as the system of national faith were framed conformable to the doctrines of Calvin, his notions with respect to Church government and the mode of worship were not adopted." Robertson's Hist. of America, book 10th.

o "In England, the first Reformers were generally in the *Sublapsarian* hypothesis; but Perkins and others asserted the *Supralapsarian* way." Burnet's Expos. of the Articles, p. 151.

of church government, and in modes of worship, harmonize in their views of the gospel. If your sentiments had prevailed thus extensively, and had been professed by the great luminaries of the protestant church, I am inclined to think it would have given you no little pleasure. As you have introduced the names of Messrs. Bogue and Bennett, I will observe, by the way, that their *History of Dissenters* displays superior abilities, and a familiar acquaintance with theological literature, and that it confirms an important remark of Archbishop Newcome's, "He who cannot flatter is sure to displease."

I have also said that if a reference be made to human authors, the most eminent writers in divinity are on the side of orthodoxy; and I use this word merely as a term of distinction, but as it does not please you, I am willing to change it for any other that you may deem less exceptionable. It is frivolous to dispute about terms. The only objection I have against the words Calvinism and Arminianism is, that they seem to ascribe an undue honour to the men from whose names they are derived, as if the believers of these principles received them out of deference to their authority, and not because they think they find them in the bible. It would be well if all sects in the christian world could be designated by terms which would ascribe no pre-eminence to any man, and which would involve no invidious reflection on others.

You enumerate (p. 20.) twenty-four eminent divines who have defended Arminianism in their writings, and who have adorned it by their literary greatness, and religious excellence. *Erasmus*, who stands first, was much more eminent as a scholar, than as a christian. He had too much of that temporizing policy which strives to reconcile God and

Mammon; and, as Mrs. More justly observes, "his piety was almost as doubtful, as his wit and "learning were unquestionable.* Of all the illustrious men whom you mention, I most admire *Barrow*: for strength of intellect, and inexhaustible copiousness of mind, he comes "not a whit behind the very chief."

But you are not ignorant, Sir, that though you can produce many distinguished names, we can produce abundantly more. Out of a multitude I will select a number, in imitation of your example, and in proof of my position. Of the Catholic church the *Jansenists* were unquestionably the best part, and they held the principles of *Calvin*; but, as he was a Protestant, they called themselves *Augustinians*, after *Augustine*, a much earlier professor of the same faith. Among them we find *Arnauld*, *Pascal*, *Quesnel*, *Nicole*, and other members of the religious society at Port Royal, who were distinguished for fervent piety, and whose literary attainments have been celebrated throughout Europe.

Among Foreign Protestants, were *Luther*, *Calvin*, *Zuinglius*, *Bucer*, *Zanchius*, *Beza*, *Du Moulin*, *Claude*, *Saurin*, *Witsius*, *Hornbeek*, *Turretine*, *Pictet*, and *Stapfer*.

In our own country, and within the pale of the Establishment, were *Latimer*, *Ridley*, *Cranmer*, *Hooper*, *Jewel*, *Grindal*, *Andrews*, *Carleton*, *Abbot*, *Davenant*, *Usher*, *Gataker*, *Hall*, *Wilkins*, *Hopkins*, *Reynolds*, *Beveridge*, *Gurnal*, *Hervey*, *Whitefield*, *Walker*, *Romaine*, *Venn*, *De Courcy*, *Milner*, *Newton*, and *Robinson*.

Among the Puritans were *Bale*, *Coverdale*, *Fox*, *Perkins*, *Cartwright*, *Ainsworth*, *Hildersam*, *Bolton*, *Sibbes*, *Scudder*, *Janeway*, and *Burroughs*.

* Christian Morals. Vol. 1. p. 26.

Among the Ejected Ministers were *Calamy, Owen, Manton, Doolittle, Bates, Howe, T. Goodwin, Flavel, Charnock, Alleine, Caryl, T. Gale, Heywood, Jacomb, and Pool.*

Dissenting Churches have produced *Bunyan, Henry, Evans, S. Brown, Wright, Harris, Grosvenor, Neal, Hurrion, Bradbury, Watts, Doddridge, Guyse, Gill, Stennett, Booth, and Williams.*

Proceeding to Scotland we meet with *Wishart, Knox, Leighton, Boston, Halyburton, Dunlop, MacLaurin, the Erskines, Witherspoon, Gillies, and Riccaltoun.*

Passing over to America we meet with *Mather, Stoddard, Colman, Edwards, Davies, Bellamy, Hopkins, Linn, and Rodgers.*

You, however, betray a consciousness that you will gain nothing by a reference to the sentiments of eminent divines, by saying, "As the questions in dispute are not to be determined by a majority of votes, it would be idle to spend time in balancing the number of writers who have declared themselves in favour of each side of the controversy." (p. 14.)

The truth of all religious principles is doubtless to be ascertained by comparing them with the bible; and the advocates for Calvinism appeal to it as frequently and explicitly as any people in the christian world. That sacred volume is the source of religious knowledge, the standard of faith, and the criterion by which truth must be distinguished from error. But when a man has diligently studied the bible, and formed his creed from it, according to the best of his judgment, is it not a high satisfaction to his mind, to find that his views are similar to those of the men who most deserve to be 'had in everlasting remembrance?' Is it an uninteresting, or an unprofitable employment, to enquire what have been the

prevailing sentiments of those illustrious beings who were the favourites of Heaven, and the benefactors of the church? Do not all religious denominations esteem great and good men an honour and a blessing to them? Are not Arminians as eager to claim such characters, and as prone to glory in them, as any people whatever? And is it not a presumption in favour of Calvinism, that Natives and Foreigners, Churchmen and Dissenters, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists, have united in attachment to this system? Of those

“ Saints who taught and led the way to heaven ;”

Of those excellent authors who studied and prayed, wrote and preached, suffered and died in the service of Jesus Christ, a great majority rank on our side, and they reflect a glory on our cause which cannot be obscured.

The fame of the authors has given a wide circulation to their works. The theological catalogues of the booksellers prove with what avidity they are sought, and at what enormous prices they are charged. When I was in London during the last year, a very respectable bookseller in the methodist connection, told me he never knew calvinistic divinity sell at such a rate in his life. The number of these books which Mr. Wesley has introduced into his ‘ Christian Library ;’ and which your friends have revised, abridged, or arminianised, and republished, is no inconsiderable proof of their merit.

You suppose I am not aware of what is going on in the religious world, beyond the precincts of my own community, and therefore you kindly inform me of the extensive sale of the Commentaries of Mr. Benson, and Dr. Clarke, of the Bishop of *Lincoln’s* Refutation of Calvinism, and of the *Arminian Magazine* ; and of new editions of *Wes-*

ley's and Fletcher's Works, of Walter Sellon's Anticalvinistic works, and of Whitby on the Five Points. To me, literary intelligence is always welcome, and as I wish to be equal to you in civility, I will give you some information on the other side.

Matthew Henry's Commentary, large as it is, has had a much more extensive sale than any other, and at present there are three editions in the market. *Dr. Gill's* Exposition has been reprinted in nine quarto volumes. *Mr. Scott's* valuable work on the bible is passing through the sixth edition. There are two editions of *Dr. Doddridge's* Family Expositor, a splendid quarto, and a handsome octavo, at present on sale. *Dr. Guyse's* Paraphrase issued again from the press the last year. *Dr. Owen's* Exposition of the Hebrews, in four volumes folio, is now reprinting at Edinburgh in six large volumes octavo.

The calvinistic writings of some of the old Divines in the Church have been again introduced to the world. *Mr. Pratt*, the Secretary of the Church Missionary Society, has published good editions, with valuable improvements, of *Bishop Hall's* Works, in ten volumes octavo; and of *Bishop Hopkins's* Works, in four volumes octavo. Two editions of *Archbishop Leighton's* Works, one in six volumes octavo, and the other in four, are at present on sale. *Romaine's* Works, in eight volumes, have been honoured with an extensive circulation. I know not any modern author whose works have been oftener printed in a collected form, than *Hervey's*. The late *Mr. Newton's* Works have been repeatedly reprinted, and a fine edition in six volumes octavo is now exhausted, or nearly so. *Mr. Robinson's* book on the Scripture Characters is rapidly passing through the eighth edition.

Nor have the writings of Dissenting Ministers

been neglected. A large edition of *Dr. Watts's Works* in seven volumes octavo, instead of satisfying, has stimulated the desire of the public, and has produced new editions of his *Select Works*, in three volumes octavo, and of his *Whole Works* in six elegant quartos, and in nine handsome octavos. *Dr. Doddridge's Works* in ten large volumes octavo, have been equally beneficial to the editors, and acceptable to the public. *Edwards's Works*, in seven volumes, at first sold slowly, but of late the demand for them has much increased, and now only a few copies remain in the hands of the bookseller. To these must be added new editions of *Bunyan's Works*, in three volumes. *Sibbes's Works*, in three volumes. *Truill's Works*, in four volumes. *Howe's Works*, in seven volumes. *Witherspoon's Works*, in nine volumes. *Stennett's Works*, in four volumes. *Calvin's Institutes*, a new translation, in three volumes. *Ridgley's Body of Divinity*, in four volumes. *Dr. Gill's Body of Divinity*, and his *Cause of God and Truth*; and a countless number of minor pieces which are in continual demand, and are seldom out of print. Proposals have been lately issued for reprinting the *Works of Charnock* and *Bates*, and from the merit of the authors, the conductors of these undertakings may justly expect success.

The prevalence of Calvinism may also be inferred from the diligent researches that have been made into the lives, labours, and sufferings of its professors. *Neal's History of the Puritans* has been reprinted, with notes and supplementary chapters, by *Dr. Toulmin* in five volumes octavo; and has been abridged by *Mr. Parsons* in two volumes octavo. *Mr. Palmer's Nonconformist's Memorial* has appeared again, much enlarged. *Messrs. Bogue* and *Bennett* have begun at the æra of the revolution, and have related the *History of the Dis-*

senters, to the Year 1808, in four volumes; of which they are now preparing a second edition. Mr. *Brooke*, after many years of inquiry and investigation, has produced the *Lives of the Puritans*, in three volumes. Mr. WILSON has published *the history and antiquities of Dissenting churches in London*, in four volumes, embellished with elegant portraits. A work which contains an abundant store of information, collected from all quarters, and from sources that are inaccessible to readers in general. Dr. M'CRIE has lately written the *life of Knox*, in two volumes, with fidelity, judgment, and spirit; which has had a most extensive circulation, and has produced a considerable influence on the public mind. I am told he is now preparing for the press, the *life of Welch*, upon the same plan.

This detail, Sir, will shew that the activity is not wholly on your side, and that if the call for Arminian books is at present very great, that for Calvinistic books has been so for many years; and continues unabated.

It would be strange indeed if the major part of religious books were written upon a system which is so absurd, and injurious as Calvinism is, according to your representations. But when its principles are correctly stated, many of the common objections against them fall to the ground. The scheme, in brief, is this: Man, in his present circumstances, is a depraved and guilty creature; and, on account of the depravity of his nature, and the guilt of his life, he is condemned by the divine law, and is obnoxious to present suffering, and to future punishment. This condemnation he cannot avert, and this punishment he cannot endure. He is unable to rise from that abyss in which he is sunk; unable to expiate the evil of those crimes which he has committed; unable to regain that state of inno-

cence and of happiness which he has lost. This inability is not a want of natural power, but of moral inclination ; it arises from the perverseness of the human will, and the enmity of the human heart against God and goodness. For beings in this deplorable state, and with these wretched dispositions, there can be no salvation but by the atonement of Jesus Christ ; which, being of infinite value, is to be preached to all that need it ; and its blessings will be granted to all that seek them with their whole hearts. But the grand question between Arminians and Calvinists is, *whence arises the disposition to seek ?* The origin of spiritual dispositions is the vital part of the controversy. The bible always ascribes the unwillingness of a sinner to renounce his sins, and to come to Christ, to himself ; but it never ascribes his salvation to the impulse of his own will, nor to the exertion of his own power. All spiritual dispositions, all penitential feelings, all holy desires, arise solely from the operations of the spirit of God on the human heart ; and these operations, are the execution of a divine decree, and the result of an eternal purpose. The misery of the wicked is the just punishment of their guilt ; and the salvation of the righteous is the effect of the distinguishing grace of God, which is freely given, for it might be justly withheld. Can such a decree of benevolence, and such a sovereignty which is only exerted to save the unworthy, deserve all the charges and invectives which are continually urged against them ?

I have the pleasure to speak with unqualified approbation of your paragraph respecting Dr. CHANDLER, and I wish that all your animadversions had displayed the same wisdom and equity. He was highly and deservedly esteemed for his learning and integrity, but his views of religion ap-

pear to have varied at different periods of his life. A passage might be quoted from one his sermons, which speaks the language of Calvin in very striking terms, but his general silence on the great subjects of the gospel, renders it doubtful to what denomination of christians he belongs. He was reputed an Arminian by his contemporaries, but the modern Arians claim him, and regard him as an honour to them. You say he evidently leaned to Arianism; and add, "You would justly complain of me, were I to identify Calvinism with all the abominations of antinomian delusion and licentiousness. And let me ask you, is it fair in you, to identify Arminianism with Pelagian and Arian errors?" Indeed Sir, I am far from wishing to make you responsible for the sentiments of the Pelagians, or Arians, or for any sentiments that you disavow; and it is most devoutly to be desired that when Calvinism is to be delineated, the artist would give us a faithful portrait, and not a hideous caricature. We should then meet with no more 'decrees of reprobation,' 'children in hell not above a span long,' &c. &c. When the several denominations of religion have learned to treat each other with *justice*, they may make speeches at public meetings about *charity*, with a better grace.

You are indignant at the phrase. "heretical notions," and you mention the names and virtues of several who have held them as important truths. The distinction between persons and opinions is very obvious; and whatever we think about the one, we may highly esteem the other. You have unequivocally exhibited your hostility to Calvinism, but you say that a great number of christians who have embraced that creed, are entitled to every possible mark of respect for their talents and vir-

tues ; and I have said nothing against Arminianism which is inconsistent with a cordial assent to your statements, about the indefatigable activity of WESLEY, the missionary zeal of COKE, and the high respectability of several living personages. Whatever are men's principles, let justice be done to their characters.

As to the views of christians in the prospect of death, I have not asserted, for I never supposed, that they all die in the belief of the peculiar doctrines of Calvinism. You say (p. 25,) that "BAXTER, WATTS, " and DODDRIDGE, though they did not embrace " the Arminian system, yet in their advanced age, " they were much less attached to Calvin's peculiarities than they were in early life." BAXTER was never accounted a Calvinist, though he has said such things as seem to involve the admission of this doctrine to all its extent, but he was probably as much so in his old age as at any period of his life. His 'Aphorisms on Justification,' which of all his writings approach nearest to Arminianism, were the first work he published, and he afterwards censured them more than any other of his works. I know not on what authority you have asserted that WATTS deviated from Calvinism in his advanced age, and it is easy to prove that the reverse was the case with DODDRIDGE. Dr. KIPPIS says, "When I was a student under " him, he used frequently, on a Saturday evening, " to read, in the Academy, the sermons he made in " *in his younger years* ; and they were much admired by his pupils, as containing models for " their imitation, far superior to those which he " could then have leisure to give in his usual Sunday discourses. One thing which pleased most " of us was, that *these sermons had less of the Calvinistical dress of expression than was adopted by*

"him after his settlement at Northampton."* Here we are informed, in direct opposition to your assertion, that Doddridge was more attached to Calvinism in his advanced years, than he was in early life; and this information is given by an eminent divine, who was no Calvinist; who lived in his family; who heard his former sermons read, and his latter ones preached; and who, therefore, had the best opportunity of ascertaining the fact.

Proceeding a little farther, I meet with this passage: "Of the ever memorable HALES, of Eton, his biographer, says, that in his younger days he was a Calvinist; but at the well pressing of John iii. and 16th, by Episcopius, before the Synod of Dort, *there I bid John Calvin good night*, as he has often told me." Being told what sentiments he renounced, let us enquire what were those he adopted, that we may judge how far the change was an improvement. WOOD, in his *Athenæ Oxoniensis*, page 126th, informs us that, either through his conversation with some foreign divines, whilst in Holland, at the famous Synod of Dort; or through discontent at not being preferred according to his merit; or from a desire of distinguishing himself by new opinions; he seemed in one part of his life, to have given into the Socinian and Pelagian tenets: till Archbishop LAUD, partly by his arguments, partly by preferments, regained and confirmed him in an orthodox principle. As orthodoxy, according to your interpretation, signifies a man's own opinion, we may easily know what was that creed to which Laud, by arguments and preferments, proselyted this author.

A reference to some of his works will prove how far he departed from the Reformer of Geneva; but

* Dr. Kippis's life of Doddridge, prefixed to the Family Expositor, p. 22.

whether he ever retraced any of his footsteps, I am unable to ascertain. In the fifth chapter of his "*Brevis disquisitio*" he affirms that the Trinity, the Incarnation, the meritorious satisfaction of Christ, original sin, and many doctrines like to these, can neither be defended out of scripture, nor out of the principles of philosophy; in the eighth chapter he denies the conscious existence of the soul in the intermediate state; and in the tenth and eleventh chapters, he advances the most unfounded, violent, and shocking charges against Calvinism that I ever read. His 'discourse touching the peace and concord of the church' is an elaborate, and an ingenious apology for the Socinians. His object, through the whole piece, is to prove that denying the divinity of Christ, rejecting his pre-existence, and judging redemption to be both absurd and impossible, do not corrupt the soundness of a man's faith, nor endanger the salvation of his soul. When he published these Tracts he withheld his name from them; and thus acted the cowardly and insidious part of anonymous writers, who advance opinions and censures which they dare not avow; and who confess their shame, and secure their safety, by covering themselves with the shades of concealment.

Hence it appears, that after this man *bade John Calvin good night*, he proceeded far beyond the principles of Arminius; and that, according to the custom of those who change their party, he inveighed with great malignity and injustice against his quondam friends. You, however, claim him, and give him a place among the advocates and ornaments of the arminian faith. Be it so, but, having received him, how will you like to become responsible for his opinions? With what consistency can you deny the charge of pelagianism? And with what propriety can you be

angry at me for giving you Dr. CHANDLER, whose character was more exalted, whose talents were more powerful, and whose sentiments were nearer to yours, than were those of "the ever memorable JOHN HALES of Eton?"

Though you are very unfortunate in your selection of examples, I do not question the truth of the assertion which you intend to prove. You may produce instances of Divines who have become more moderate in their regard to Calvinism, or who have renounced this system altogether, in the decline of life; and I could easily produce other instances of Divines who, though they once zealously opposed these principles, afterwards thought more favourably of them, and felt more kindly toward the christians who professed them. Such instances are, I believe, more numerous than the other. When a man thinks seriously of himself, and reflects solemnly on the realities of eternity, he becomes sensible of his own weakness, and unworthiness; and he feels his urgent need of the complete atonement of the Saviour, and the omnipotent grace of the holy Spirit. BURNHAM'S *pious Memorials*, MIDDLETON'S *Biographia Evangelica*, and other *obituaries*, contain abundant evidence that the sentiments of good men become more alike, and their dispositions toward each other become more cordial, as they approach nearer to the world of complete knowledge, entire harmony, perfect holiness, and everlasting bliss.

I have now considered your animadversions on my sermon, and here I might terminate my reply; but I will not allow several extraneous circumstances which you have introduced, to pass uncensured. Page 18th, you say "While I am writing this, a report is in circulation, that the members of your own community, considering themselves

* disgraced by your publication, are collecting all "the copies of it they can find, either to burn them, " or to cut them up as waste paper." Sensible persons seldom pay much attention to a flying report, unless it happens to be agreeable to their wishes. By whom this tale was fabricated, on what foundation it rests, and by what evidence it is authenticated, I suppose it will be in vain to inquire. The fact is, you have attracted the attention of the public to this sermon so much, that if I had printed and published a great number of copies, they might have been sold. Authors know very well, that when they present any work to the public, they have nothing so much to dread as neglect; and the most effectual security against this neglect is for somebody to write animadversions upon it. Then one talks against it, and another for it, and this collision of opposite opinions exalts it into notice, and pushes it into circulation.

Whether my friends are ashamed of this sermon or not, you tell me (p. 37th,) that I ought to be. You call it a miserable sermon; and you say that I am bound in honour as a Gentleman, and in conscience as a christian Minister, to apologise for it to my congregation, and to the world. If I had interlarded this sermon with captious criticisms, and hearsay stories, the epithet 'miserable,' would have been appropriate; and if you had felt the obligations of honour and of conscience while you were writing your letter, it would have been incomparably superior to what it is, and you might have urged these obligations upon me with greater effect. I am not bound by any tie whatever, to make an apology to the world; for, be the sermon what it may, it has never been presented to the world, and the world has nothing to do with it. It rather behoves you to apologise for troubling the world with public animadversions on an unpub-

lished Sermon. As to my own congregation, I will postpone an apology until they call for it. Were they to decide between us, they would much sooner call upon you to apologise for assertions that cannot be proved, and for insulting gasconade that cannot be justified. The operation of your pamphlet on their minds, has been to procure me numerous and pleasing demonstrations of respect and attachment.

When apologies are called for they must begin on your side. In the address on behalf of Methodist missions it is said, "The *peculiar advantages* with which a Methodist Missionary enters upon his work among the Heathen are obvious. His mind not fettered by an imaginary decree of reprobation, he publishes without any restriction, 'Whoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.' " An advantage which is *peculiar* to a Methodist Missionary is one from which all other Missionaries are *excluded*; and the plain intimation is that the Missionaries of the Society in London, Church Missionaries, Moravian Missionaries, and Baptist Missionaries, are all fettered by an imaginary decree of reprobation. This is not the sentiment of an individual, and a young man, but is the accredited address of a large society, of which many thousands have been printed. When this most offensive misrepresentation has been corrected, when this sweeping slander on a considerable part of the christian world has been retracted, your exhortation to me will come with all the efficacy of example.

In page 19th, I meet with this passage, "You recollect, that a few years ago, you felt a desire to have possession of a Methodist Chapel in the neighbourhood where you reside. Prompted by that desire, by means best known to yourself,

“ you opened the doors on a Sunday evening; collected a congregation, ascended the pulpit, and preached no doubt, an orthodox sermon; and gave notice to your auditors, that notwithstanding the opposition you anticipated from the trustees, you should do the same the Sunday evening following.” This relates to the chapel at THURSTONLAND; of which it is requisite that I should give some account. The inhabitants of that village wished to erect a chapel there; and the movers of the business solicited subscriptions of all sorts of persons, saying that the intended place should be open to Ministers of any denomination. Among the Trustees are men of different sentiments; and the trust deed appoints the preacher or preachers who shall officiate, to be chosen by a majority of the Trustees and Subscribers, without mentioning any party, or specifying any class of religious principles. When the chapel was erected, the Methodists occupied it, I believe, every other Sabbath, morning and afternoon, and it was usually vacant in the evening. My friend, Mr. POOL, of *Honley*, and myself, proposed to preach in it once a month, on a Sabbath evening, according to the constitution of the place, the invitation of some of the Trustees and Subscribers, and, as we supposed, in perfect harmony with those who occupied it at other times. It soon, however, appeared, that the Methodists wished to have the place to themselves, and, for this purpose, by a decision of a majority of the Trustees, Mr. POOL and myself were excluded from the chapel, and notice was sent us accordingly, by an Attorney’s clerk.

I did not therefore feel a desire to have a “ Methodist Chapel,” but one from which the Methodists may at any time be excluded by the decision of a majority; of which Independents are Trustees; to which Independents subscribed; and

which cannot be appropriated solely to any party without breaking promises on the faith of which persons were induced to give their money. I did not "desire to have possession" of this place, but merely that myself, or some neighbouring Independent Minister might occupy it once a month, in perfect harmony with those who occupied it at other times. I did not "open the doors by means best known to myself," but found them open, entered peaceably, and preached without molestation. I did not announce myself to preach "the Sunday evening following," but the ensuing month. The most favourable construction that can be put upon your account is, that you have been misled by erroneous information; but young as I am, you are much younger, if you have not learned that report, though a quick traveller, is an uncertain guide. Painfully as I felt at the time, I had no wish to introduce this story to the public; and if there be any blame in reviving and publishing it, that blame falls upon you. Misrepresentation may prevail for a while, but happy are they who shall triumph when justice predominates.

Page 20th, you say "I hope you will not be offended if I remind you that the sentiments of the poor unfortunate Michael Servetus, were also consecrated by blood. You know, Sir, after he had made his escape from the horrid walls of a Popish dungeon, he fell into the hands of Calvin, barbarous Calvin, who burnt him alive with green wood." Whether I am offended or not, I am not at all surprised that you should contrive to introduce the story of Servetus. It is so dishonourable to the memory of Calvin, and furnishes so many materials for invective, that many of your friends relate it, and enlarge upon it frequently, and with satisfaction. Persecution for opinions was not then confined to one individual, nor to one par-

ty, but was the evil of that age, and infected the minds of all classes. The situation of the Reformers was critical: the Papists were continually reproaching them with the strange and monstrous opinions which they said prevailed among them, and they seem to have sacrificed poor Servetus to to clear themselves of the charge. Calvin apprised him of his danger before he came to Geneva, and when he rashly ventured thither, he was tried and condemned, not by Calvin, but by the laws of the State, and the Magistrates of the city; and after the sentence, Calvin deplored his fate, and sought to obtain a mitigated punishment. True indeed he approved of the transaction, and so did BUCER, ŒCOLAMPADIUS, FAREL, and BEZA. And even MELANCTHON, whose character you much admire, and whose life and portrait were inserted in the Arminian Magazine some years ago—the mild and gentle MELANCTHON thus expressed himself on the subject in a letter to Calvin, “In my opinion, “your magistrates have acted justly in putting to death a blasphemer, convicted by due process of “law.” The disgrace therefore arising from the lamentable fate of Servetus is not peculiar to Calvin, but extends to others whom I believe you have no disposition to blame. Whatever opinion may be formed of this event in particular, and of the character of the Reformer of Geneva in general, our sentiments are clearly distinct from them. They did not originate in his mind, nor do they rest upon his authority. They confessedly existed in the church many ages before he was born, and if they are not sanctioned by scripture let them fall to the ground.*

* I would refer the reader who wishes to ascertain the truth on this subject, to SENNEBIER'S *account of Calvin's treat of Servetus*, in Dr. ERSKINE'S *Sketches and Hints of church history*, Vol. 2. p. 277; and to BAYLE'S *Dict. art. Calvin*. Sennebier's religious sentiments were very different from those of Calvin, and

You relate some other stories which are so strange in their nature, and so extremely doubtful in their evidence, that I am "slow of heart to believe them." But if they are true, what do they prove? The easiest and the worst way of attacking any body of religious people is telling tales of some worthless individuals who may be found among them. This is a source of censure which will never be exhausted, and this is the mode in which infidels have continually assailed christianity itself. There are men of stupid understandings, malignant dispositions, depraved hearts, and wicked lives among us; and it requires neither the attribute of omniscience, nor even the lantern of Diogenes, to find them among you. In the church militant, the tares and the wheat grow together; the holy and the just are mingled with the worthless and the vile; and you have no right to reproach another denomination on account of spurious professors, except your own were free from them. Such charges may always be retaliated; of such recriminations there would be no end; and such sort of squabbles are supremely disgusting to the best minds. Permit me to recommend to your perusal two Sermons of GROVE's, one of your favorite Arminian writers, entitled "The corruptions among Christians, no good objection against the gospel."*

In page 32nd, you class my humble statements with the arguments of OWEN, the bullying rage of

therefore his account deserves the more credit. Bayle was a sceptic, and perhaps an infidel, but he has investigated the matter with impartiality and candour. He had more justice and honour than to adopt the wretched fabrications with which the Papists sought to blacken the character of this eminent Reformer, and which have since been incessantly and confidently repeated.

* Post, Wks. 2. 308.

TOPLADY, the wit of **BERRIDGE**, and the metaphysical acuteness of **Dr. WILLIAMS**. **TOPLADY** and **BERRIDGE** were calvinistic Methodists, and **Drs. OWEN** and **WILLIAMS** were Independent dissenters. I will take my own side, and I heartily thank you for putting me into such good company. In return, if I knew your name, I would class the animadversions of Mr. —, with the luminous simplicity of **WESLEY**, the arguments of **FLETCHER**, and the criticisms of **Dr. CLARKE**, and so we should both think ourselves highly honoured, and feel very well pleased.

With all your ill humour, you express your respectful opinion of many christians of the calvinistic persuasion; and you give a high and just eulogium of their characters. With equal sincerity and pleasure I will avow my conviction, that there are among the Arminians, many of "the excellent of the earth;" and that their exertions in the cause of religion have been extensive, zealous, and successful. May the number of such ornaments to christianity be multiplied; and may their services be inspired by the purest motives, be regulated by infallible wisdom, and be crowned with the approbation of Heaven.

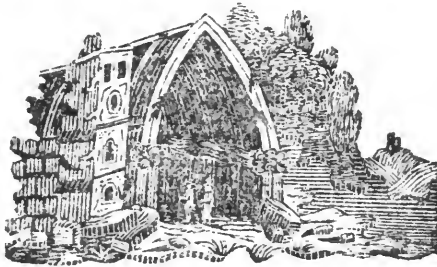
You take leave of me by quoting a passage from **HOWE**, and I will conclude this letter by directing your attention to the advice which **COWPER** gave to his nephew, who was intended for the church, and was then entering upon theological studies. The freedom of the expression must be ascribed to the familiarity of a private letter written to a young man, who was a near relation. "Let your divinity, if I may advise, be the divinity of the glorious reformation: I mean in contradiction to Arminianism, and all the *isms* that were ever broached in this world of error and ignorance. The divinity of the Reformation is called

“ Calvinism, but injuriously. It has been that of
“ the church of Christ in all ages. It is the divi-
“ nity of St. Paul, and of St. Paul’s Master, who
“ met him in his way to Damascus.”—*Hayley’s*
Life of Comper. Vol. 3, p. 234.

I am, Sir.

Yours respectfully,

JOHN COCKIN.



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